



MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP, INC.

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WINTER WELCOME A SUCCESS

On December 13, many residents and visitors came to Storrs Center to enjoy the 2nd Annual Winter Welcome. With special treats, sales, and open houses at participating businesses, residents were able to check off some of their holiday shopping lists on the sunny Saturday.

As 2:00 pm neared, a small crowd gathered outside of the UConn Co-op Bookstore at Storrs Center to await the arrival of a Mountain Dairy milk truck, which was rumored to have a special passenger on board. To the delight of those braving the weather outside and those enjoying the warmth and cookies inside the bookstore, Santa Claus arrived



as promised! He himself was in for a surprise as a walking, talking Christmas tree was there to meet him (Town of Mansfield Zoning Agent Curt Hirsch was the man beneath the boughs).

Santa visited with friends young and old while the E. O. Smith High School Chamber Singers and Mansfield Middle School Chamber Choir caroled throughout the downtown. At 4:00 pm, the groups reconvened on the Town Square for a joint performance and to lead in a community sing-along. As the temperature dropped and the students sang, the winter lights on the Town Square turned on, adding to the festive feeling on the Square.

The Mansfield Downtown Partnership, Storrs Center master developer LeylandAlliance, and Hart Realty Advisers thank the participating businesses, the E. O. Smith High School Chamber Singers and the Mansfield Middle School Chamber Choir, Mountain Dairy, the UConn Co-op Bookstore at Storrs Center, Curt Hirsch, and of course, Santa Claus for helping to make the 2nd Annual Winter Welcome a success!

As was overheard at the end of the sing-along: Let's do this again next year! ♦





BRUEGGER'S BAGELS & JAMBA JUICE NOW OPEN!



In early November, Bruegger's Bagels and Jamba Juice opened their shared location in 8 Royce Circle in Storrs Center. These two highly anticipated eateries have already become popular destinations.

The star of the show at Bruegger's Bagels is, of course, their freshly made bagels. Their menu includes traditional bagels and cream cheese; bagel sandwiches, including hamburgers; salads and soups; and coffee. Bruegger's is open daily from 6:00 am until 7:00 pm. During the holidays, they will close at 5:00 pm daily.

Jamba Juice is another appropriately named business as their main attractions are their freshly-pressed juices and made-to-order smoothies. They also offer "energy bowls" full of oatmeal, fruit, and yogurt. Jamba Juice opens everyday at 7:00 am. Mondays through Saturday, they are open until 11:00 pm, and on Sundays, they are open until 10:00 pm. During the holidays, they will close at 5:00 pm daily. ♦



STORRS CENTER: ADDING A WELCOME DOWNTOWN BUZZ

By Therese Karmel—This essay originally appeared in The Hartford Courant

Each year I do more and more online holiday shopping. I'm not nuts about this way of selecting presents, but frankly, it is easier than driving an hour from my home in eastern Connecticut to a shopping mall.

That will now change because of Storrs Center, a collection of shops that line the once-forlorn streets on the south-eastern edge of the University of Connecticut campus.

After years of planning and a new era of cooperation between town and gown, Storrs Center has become a bustling commercial area that would shock alumni whose most vivid memories are of dusty, nondescript, poorly stocked stores.

For years, little shops came and went in a run-down strip mall that UConn owned: A convenience store with dust balls floating in the air (but a pretty good deal on coffee cards); a sports store in which you heard "we'll have to order that" when you asked for, say, golf balls; a few esoteric gift shops that never seemed to have anything anyone wanted; a flower shop that ripped off students for a dozen roses on Valentine's Day; a variety store with stacks of penny candy and suspicious clerks who became CIA terrorist trackers if anyone with a backpack happened in for a hit of Lik-M-Aid. (I'll exempt the Campus Restaurant — that bastion of the '60s and '70s campus revolutionaries, where Judy Collins once sang and Odetta had a cup of coffee. It was a beloved off-campus institution that promoted community, much like the atmosphere of Storrs Center's town square.)

Most of these enterprises, which paid UConn a hefty rental, had short (and empty) shelf lives.

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RAVE REVIEWS (continued from page 2)

When it became clear that Storrs Center was taking over, the knee-deep potholes in the strip mall went unfilled, because it was to be torn up.

A few local businesses, such as Storrs Automotive, a travel agency, Husky Pizza and a barber shop, stayed and were absorbed into Storrs Center, and are spiffier and more inviting than in their former lives.

The planners envisioned a college town center like Amherst and those that are home to other New England schools. It's not Berkeley or Cambridge — what is? — but it's a healthy start to livening up the community and keeping business local.

When it was first proposed, I resisted the idea because I didn't want to lose the so-called "rural atmosphere" of Mansfield. Silly me. Mansfield is plenty rural — 65 percent of it is undeveloped. Now it has the best of both worlds.

So this year, my presents will include high-class chocolate, gourmet cookies, books (many signed by visiting writers) and Husky clothing from the off-campus branch of the UConn Co-op. I can take visitors to the world class Ballard Puppet Museum finally rescued from its Depot campus outpost, which it shared with a prison. There's a package store in Storrs Center (for years town planners thought it was dangerous to have one across from the high school) and restaurants: Asian, Italian, Mexican, French and a branch of Pomfret's popular Vanilla Bean called the Dog Lane Café, where patrons can stay as long as they want.

One small Asian restaurant sells neon pink, green and orange bubble tea. The last time I saw that sold was in a specialty shop in London's Notting Hill, next door to a rock 'n' roll memorabilia shop where two fat black cats live in the window. And recently a bagel store opened — take that, West Hartford. Other urban reflections include walk-in medical and dental clinics, a supermarket, pharmacy, banks and a physical therapy facility.

Many of the stores and restaurants are on the ground floor of apartment buildings. When the buildings first went up, we joked that the architecture was more like that of central Europe, prompting a friend and me to refer to Storrs as "Antwerp." But I welcome the urban flavor they bring to the part of the state known as the Quiet Corner (I'm not sure that's a name to brag about).

So thanks, forward -thinking planners, for injecting vitality into this community and for giving me a place to shop, eat and meet friends — those basics of life we all desire, without having to drive miles and spend hours finding a parking place.

Terese Karmel, a former Courant writer, teaches sports journalism and is an academic adviser at UConn. ♦



UPCOMING DOWNTOWN EVENTS

Saturday, Dec 20

Puppets on a Holiday, 1.00 PM & 3.00 PM, [Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry](#); Tickets at the door; cash only: \$10 for adults, \$7 for students, & \$5 for children

Tuesday, Jan 6

Geno Auriemma Show, 6.00 PM, [Geno's Grille](#); Reservations recommended

Tuesday, Jan 13

Geno Auriemma Show, 6.00 PM, [Geno's Grille](#); Reservations recommended

Monday, Jan 19

Geno Auriemma Show, 6.00 PM, [Geno's Grille](#); Reservations recommended

Friday, Jan 23

[Matthew Polezani](#), 8.00 PM, Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts, [jorgensen.uconn.edu](#)

Wednesdays

[Board Game Night](#), 6.00 PM, [Friendly Fire Game Center](#), Free and open to the public



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